

**Subject: [Patrin] HRP Letter of concern: ethnically motivated attacks
against Roma**

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HRP Letter of concern: ethnically motivated attacks against Roma

Letter of a Concern from the Human Rights Project, Bulgaria

To the attention of the Interior Minister, Georgi Petkanov
Copy to the Regional Police Department in Samokov

Dear Mr. Minister,

The Human Rights Project (HRP) is a non-governmental public interest organization, which was established in 1992. Major activities of the organization are to conduct independent investigation of cases of human rights abuse against Roma, to provide legal defense for Roma victims of human rights violations on ethnic basis, to make similar cases public.

On September 18th, 2001 the HRP was signaled that there is an ethnically motivated attack against Roma from the town of Samokov. On September 19, 2001 representatives of the HRP conducted independent investigation of the case.

On September 15, 2001, at about 2:30 a.m. the two Roma Lyubomir Metodiev and Alexander Iliev, both of them living in the Roma neighborhood in the town of Samokov (with a population of 7,000 people) went to a night shop situated to Bus station "Yug" (South) in the central part of the town. They were attacked there by some 20 young Bulgarians, as part of the attackers were skinheads armed with axes and baseball bats. Metodiev was hit with an axe at his right hand, and managed to escape, and Iliev was severely beaten which resulted in brain and other injuries all over the body. During the assault the attackers cursed the Roma.

Immediately after the attack Iliev was hospitalized in the emergency ward in Samokov in a deteriorated health condition. On September 19, 2001 he was not released from hospital. Metodiev had a wound in his right hand, which imposed medical intervention.

On September 19 and 20, 2001 the HRP was informed that a group of young Bulgarians attacked a 13-year-old Roma pupil, who was severely injured in the face.

The Human Rights Project is concerned about the fact that the Regional Police Department takes no measures in investigating the case. We believe that the Roma in the town of Samokov have not been granted their human rights prevention. The refusal of the police to provide equal protection and to stand up for its rights is a clear evidence of

discriminatory treatment of the Roma in the town. That is why we address you to adopt the necessary measures in order to guarantee human rights prevention of the Roma and the ethnic peace in the town of Samokov. We would also insist on conducting exhaustive, unbiased and objective investigation of the mentioned above cases on behalf of the state.

The HRP considers that the pointed data and the testimonies of the local Roma complaining from the increased ethnic hatred against Roma, as well as the lack of adequate measures on part of police authorities impose the necessity of the Police and other municipal and state authorities adopting measures.

Dilyana Giteva
Executive Director
Human Rights Project, Bulgaria

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